

ABSTRACT

The invention provides an apparatus enabling a selection of an appropriate coding mod. This apparatus determines one of a plurality 5 of candidate coding modes of an image block. A full-pel prediction step derives a coding cost of each coding mode, based on motion estimation with integer pixel accuracy for small blocks, which are obtained with division methods of each coding mode. A candidate division method selecting step selects a subset of candidate division methods of a 10 plurality of coding modes, based on the coding costs derived by the full-pel prediction). A sub-pel prediction step derives a coding cost of each candidate division method, based on motion estimation with non-integer pixel accuracy for the small blocks obtained with a subset of the subset of candidate division methods. A division method 15 determining step determines a division method of the image block, based on the coding costs derived by the sub-pel prediction.